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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000288

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

RABAT/CASABLANCA PASS TO IBB/DAVID STRAWMAN, DARREL DUCKWORTH IN TANGIER; STATE PASS TO AF/E, AF/EX, AF/PD; SECSTATE PASS TO BBG TARIQ FAROOQI, JOHN BOWEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [KPAO](#) [KPAO](#) [DJ](#) [BBG](#)

SUBJECT: DORALE RADIO PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION, CREATES REQUEST FOR SOMALI LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING SUPPORT

11. (U) SUMMARY: This is an action request, see paragraph

18. The International Board of Broadcasting's three year, \$1.2 million renovation of Radio Television Djibouti's Dorale transmitting station is nearing completion. The renovations give RTD expanded broadcasting capability, allowing its signals to reach well into the Ethiopian and Somalia interiors and as far as Sudan. The renovation, which has included installation of three transmitters, is part of a bilateral agreement between the Government of Djibouti (RTD) and IBB for the long-term lease and licensing of the PK-12 site used for Radio Sawa broadcasting. END SUMMARY

12. (U) The bilateral agreement to lease land for a Radio Sawa transmitting station included a \$1.2 million renovation project for the state-owned Radio Television Djibouti's dilapidated transmitting station at Dorale. Due to funding concerns, it was decided that RTD would award a facility upgrade contract locally. IBB would install and commission the three transmitters and upgrade the existing short wave antenna system using its own technical resources. An agreement to this effect was signed in June 2004.

13. (U) In June 2004, IBB provided RTD with money and drawings for facility cleanup and upgrade. Work included demolition, cleanup and removal of old equipment, painting (walls and towers), roof and ceiling replacement, air-conditioning, plumbing and bath room refurbishment, switchgear refurbishment, wiring and lighting upgrade, and installation of the building grounding system.

14. (U) In late October 2004, the RTD and IBB commissioned the first medium wave (1539 kHz) transmitter. The second MW transmitter was retuned to 1116 kHz. In January 2005, a second medium wave (1116 kHz) transmitter and a short wave transmitter were installed. IBB support crews from Morocco and Germany performed the transmitter installation work. The second medium wave transmitter was placed in service in early February.

15. (U) The short wave transmitter installation and refurbishment of the short wave antenna system were completed in early March and the antenna was tested and placed in service. This transmitter gives RTD the capability to broadcast as far as Sudan and well into the Ethiopian and Somalia interiors.

16. (U) Some small equipment adjustments are still pending. IBB expects the complete renovation to be finished in May. Meanwhile, IBB remains under a 5-year contract with RTD for maintenance and warranty of the Dorale equipment. IBB expects continued technical support and advice will be provided by Moroccan FSNs on temporary duty assignments to the PK-12 site. An inauguration ceremony for the renovated station is planned for early April.

17. (U) RTD has expressed extreme satisfaction with the quality of the renovations and the support provided by IBB Washington and Morocco. Kudos are due to the excellent teamwork of IBB engineers David Despain and Gerhard Straub, and Moroccan Station Director David Strawman. Special thanks for the tireless dedication and excellent service provided to both RTD and Post by Darrel Duckworth and FSN technical crews from Morocco.

18. (SBU) IBB has discussed pursuing Congressional approval of a Somali-language service similar to Radio Sawa and Voice of America, though on a much smaller scale. RTD has already agreed, unofficially, to promote any Somali language programming which the USG can provide and assist IBB in getting maximum possible signal distribution and coverage for such programming through use of the new transmitters at Dorale. Post believes this would be an extreme advantage in the

Global War on Terrorism by bolstering Public Diplomacy efforts in the region. Post requests Department of State support for IBB's efforts in Washington. IBB contacts are Walter Borys, wborys@ibb.gov (unclass) 202-619-2035; and John Bowen, jbowen@ibb.gov (unclass) 202-619-1553.

RAGSDALE